

Swann, Pam

From: Anthony.Barbieri@albertsons.com
Sent: Friday, July 07, 2006 4:34 PM
To: DocketClerk, MOAB
Subject: Comments on Ugly Ripe Tomatoes
Attachments: ATTACHMENT.TXT

To the USDA:

I've been waiting for the opportunity to comment on the year round availability of Ugly Ripe Tomatoes for two years.

My name is Anthony Barbieri and my position is the Director of Produce and Floral for Acme Markets the leading retail chain in the Philadelphia Pa. Market.

We currently have 134 stores in 4 States - PA. NJ. DE. And MD. The Ugly Ripe Tomato has been tremendously received by our customers for one specific reason-

TASTE. A loyal following has developed over the last few years, yet there is a MAJOR PROBLEM. We can't sell the item during the winter months due to the fact the Florida Tomato Committee will not allow shipments out of the state. I have had to personally answer hundreds of customer complaints due to the unavailability, in addition to our store level personnel constantly fielding questions regarding why we don't have the item in stock.

Quite frankly the consuming public can't understand the regulations regarding shape! Repeat purchases in our business are based on experience. The Ugly Ripe provides a terrific eating experience. In addition to being the Director of Produce at Acme Markets, I'm currently a Board of Director of the PMA (Produce Marketing Association).

What we at PMA are communicating to the Industry, is that future growth of Produce Consumption will be driven by taste. We must always strive to improve what we are delivering to the consuming public every day. By not allowing Ugly Ripes out of the state, the message going out by THE Leading Industry Association is being defeated.

I strongly urge you to bypass the shape regulation on Ugly Ripe Tomatoes and give the people what they want and deserve.

If you have any further questions please feel free to call me at 610-889-4147.

Thank You Anthony Barbieri

7/10/2006